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ABSTRACT

Given the assumption that children learn societal values in schools, textbooks and teaching manuals were reviewed to determine their effects on immigrant and minority-group children. The study was limited in three ways: (1) only primary through eighth-grade materials were reviewed; (2) only the immigration period (1880-1920), the post war period (1950-1972), and the current period (1973-1982) were included; and (3) emphasis was given to Chinese, Japanese, and Jews. An unequal number of textbooks and teaching manuals were evaluated for each time period. Reviewers considered which ethnic groups were named, the tone of the citations (negative, positive, stereotyped), and the accuracy of the content. It was found that between 1880 and 1920, the basic school policy was Americanization in which ethnic groups were given little consideration. Few changes took place until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s when ethnic studies were encouraged, but mainly at the secondary level. Since 1973, teachers and textbook publishers have become more cognizant of ethnically balanced materials. Multicultural education is an accepted practice, but teachers need better education and guidelines. (BY)

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THE ROLE OF ELEMENTARY TEXTBOOKS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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American Educational Research Association

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ABSTRACT

The school is the agency of society in which the child is taught the values of the society and, in the case of immigrant and minority-group children, is acculturated and assimilated. The objective of our study, in both its historical and contemporary aspects, is to compare and analyze the effects of this process on the self-concept of the immigrant/minority-group child in different eras. Emphasis in the study is placed on the role of the textbook and teaching manuals in the process and its effects.

The study, undertaken from historical and psychological perspectives, recognizes that the elementary level curriculum is a reflection of the continuing debate in American and Canadian societies on the issues of pluralism and/or "melting pot." Readers, geographies, histories, and social studies texts and teachers' manuals (675 in toto) used during the period of the "great immigration" (1880-1920), in the post-war period during which the civil rights movement erupted (1950-72), and in the past decade (1973-82) were examined. Each volume was examined for omission, stereotypy, and positive or negative direction of references to three minority groups.

Changes in text/manual content and in multicultural studies in the different periods are discussed, together with their effects on children's self-concepts. The concluding section of the paper deals with continuing questions about placement or integration of multicultural content in the curriculum, teacher attitudes and practices, and effects on children of these factors, as well as the educational implications of these questions.

The Role of Elementary Textbooks in a Multicultural Society

The school is the agency of society in which the child is taught the values of the society and, in the case of immigrant and minority-group children, is acculturated and assimilated. The objective of our study, in both its historical and contemporary aspects, is to compare and analyze the effects of this process on the self-concept of the immigrant/minority-group child in different eras. Emphasis in the study is placed on the role of the textbook and teaching manuals in the process and its effects.

We undertook the study from historical and psychological perspectives, representing our respective disciplines, because of a common curiosity about and concern with the effects of curriculum content on immigrant and, later, minority-group children's views of themselves as individuals of worth. The study is embedded in the context of the larger society's attitudes and actions toward these groups, as well as anecdotal biographical data. Although the study is focused on a small segment of pedagogical theory and practice, the curriculum as a whole is recognized as essentially a reflection of a larger continuing debate in American and Canadian society on the issues of pluralism and/or "melting pot."

That we are not alone in our concern is evident from several sources. Other researchers in the United State have similarly examined textbooks, although many of their studies have been focused on secondary level texts or have been limited in numbers or types of books examined (Asia Society, 1976; Miel & Kiester, 1967; Yee, 1973). Canadians, who have not only a

multicultural society like our own but also two major national strains, are confronted with similar problems in their textbooks. Palmer (1982), for example, found that sixth-grade history texts treated seven historical events from different perspectives depending on whether they were oriented toward French Canadian or English Canadian populations. The self-image of Canadian Indian children as compared with their white peers is also a matter for study (Barnes & Vulcano, 1982; Corenblum & Wilson, 1982). An international conference on "Racism in children's and school textbooks," held in 1978 in the Federal Republic of Germany, paid special attention to the presentation of Third World peoples and history in textbooks. One paper focused on textbooks used in Puerto Rico, most of which were found to be classist, racist, sexist, and "Active conveyors of colonialism" (Falcón, 1979). In yet another group of studies published recently, the emphasis was on treatment of Central America and Central Americans in textbooks used in the United States (Anderson & Beck, 1982).

It is our contention, reflected in the world-wide studies of children's textbooks, that children's perceptions of other ethnic groups as well as of themselves is shaped in the school setting in the years prior to adolescence. This view is well-supported by Pike and Barrows (1979), Falcón (1979), and others. In addition, the highest grade level attained by the great majority of the U.S. population by the end of the great immigration period, that is the early 1920's, was eighth grade. In the light of these facts, we have limited our research to textbooks used in the primary through eighth grades, not only in the great immigration period, but in later eras as well to maximize comparability.

With respect to methods used, we examined readers, geographies, histories, and social studies texts, and teacher manuals, used in elementary schools during the period of the "great immigration," 1880-1920; in the post-war period during which the civil rights movement erupted, 1950-72; and in the immediate past decade, 1973-82. In each book, we looked for mention of non-Anglo/non-Protestant groups, with emphasis on Chinese, Japanese, and Jews. These three groups were chosen because they were all positively oriented to education, and because of the achievement level of their citizens (Vernon, 1982; Kriger & Kroes,1972).

If there was no mention of any or all of the subject groups in an appropriate context, the text was listed as omitting the group(s). If one or more of the groups was mentioned, further consideration was given to the tone of the citation: Was it postitive, negative, stereotyped, or neutral? How accurate was its content? Did it avoid controversial issues such as immigration quotas? Accompanying illustrations were similarly evaluated. Teachers' manuals were evaluated in terms of whether guidelines for introducing multicultural information were provided, and were rated like the texts for omission, stereotypy, and positive or negative direction. A principal reason for including these manuals was that for many decades, teachers were not permitted to deviate from the text or its accompanying manual. Indeed, Falcón (1979) alleges that this is still the policy under the centralized public education system in Puerto Rico. If the teachers may not deviate from the printed page, then it behooved us to know in what ways, if at all, the manuals modified the tone of the child's textbook.

The sources of our data are texts and teachers' manuals located in library collections in New York, Philadelphia, University Park (Pa.), and Honolulu, and books in current use in public and private schools. The brief table below gives specific numbers of volumes examined:

Table 1. Numbers of Texts and Teachers' Manuals Examined.

	Texts (gr. K-8)	Teachers' Manuals
1880-1920	303	49
1950-1972	239	10
1973-1982	76	20

In addition, autobiographical and biographical sources were examined for the personal data they included that could shed light on the effects of curriculum content on self-concept.

In the earliest period, we found readers that showed little or no concern for other cultures. Generations of school children were introduced to a sanitized, conformist, British-American-Protestant world that differed completely from the reality of their daily experience and that never exposed the students at a young, impressionable age to the scope, variety, enormous vitality, and inherent values of differing cultural literary traditions. This was equally true of the histories and geographies, which could best be described as dull, bland, and non-controversial. Like the readers, the few histories in which other cultures were mentioned contained mostly negative comments, or depicted them as existing only in ancient times. The incidence of positive or even neutral references to immigrant/minority groups was, by comparison, negligible. The values imparted by all the

books and most of the teachers were very narrow and ethnocentric, reflecting the nativist sentiments prevalent in much of society in the 1880-1920 period.

The Chinese, initially welcomed as a source of cheap and much needed labor, came to be despised as the root of all the problems that enveloped California during the 1870's. Despite their efforts at clearing forests, draining marshes, serving miners, and building railroad right-of-ways, they were without doubt the worst and most unfairly treated of all the immigrants to the United States. As early as the 1850's in California, the Chinese were faced with discriminatory tax laws, were not allowed to testify in court, and were barred from citizenship. Labor groups agitated against them and the media publicized stereotyped images of the Chinese as a dishonest, unreliable, opium-addicted, unassimilable population. As their immigration was restricted by Congress, a new wave of Asians came to the West - the Japanese. American prejudice was transferred to the newcomers who, as they settled in, aroused hostility by their diligence and success as small farmers. Soon they, too, were subjected to restrictive legislation that barred them from owning land and barred their children from San Francisco public schools.

Students interviewed in California in the early 1920's sadly related some of their conflicts. They were taught by teachers and from books that neither understood nor appreciated the cultural heritage or values of the Asian communities. Born in the United States, they were rarely accepted as Americans. One girl complained, "In ancestry and in physical appearance we are Japanese, while in birth, in education, in ideals and in ways of thinking

we are American. Nevertheless, the older Japanese will not accept us into their groups because, as they see us, we are too independent, too pert, too self-confident, and the Americans bar us from their group because we retain the yellow skin and the flat nose of the Oriental . . ." (Smith, 1927, p. 5). Another student replied to questioning in the same way: "In language, in customs, in everything, I was American. But America wouldn't have me. She wouldn't recognize me in high school, she put the picture of those of my race at the tail end of the year book" (Smith, 1927, p. 22). These young people remained in limbo straddling diverse cultures, yet never fully accepted by either one.

Very often separate elementary schools were established for Asian children, although they were later integrated into the junior and senior high schools. This often made academic and peer adjustments difficult. Yet despite all the economic, social, and other problems, Chinese and Japanese children both attended and remained in school.

Asian parents tried to keep their children close to their heritage through culturally centered classes in the afternoons after public school classes were over for the day. They shared a tradition of love of books and learning as well as an orientation toward the future rather than the present. These parental efforts, attitudes, and values were reflected in their children's positive attitudes toward schools, learning, and achievement despite the discrimination experienced in the school environment.

Lack of sensitivity to immigrants and minorities was also evident on the East Coast. The majority of pupils in New York City schools before 1920 were either born abroad or were the children of immigrants. Jewish

children alone provided 40% of the general school population (Berkson, 1920). Although individual teachers and principals were sympathetic to the varied problems of the children, the official policy of the school system was Americanization. Consequently, Jewish children faced a daily struggle with the Protestant-oriented school system that, even in schools where the population was 90% Jewish, subjected them to daily Bible reading from the New Testament as well as the Old, the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the singing of Christian hymns, and the celebration of Christian holidays (whose religious content was stressed). Interviews and reminiscences indicate that immigrant Jewish children were dismayed with these religious activities (Antin, 1912; Evans, 1973), much as their Asian peers were with the insensitivity they experienced.

Like the Chinese and Japanese parents, the Jewish parents organized afternoon religious schools that reinforced the traditional respect for education and the heritage of their people. They saw the public schools, despite the conflicts they engendered, as the agent of social mobility, the road to good citizenship, and the route to future achievement for their children. The schools did indeed contribute the information and skills needed to move their students toward these goals, but the "push" came from the ancient tradition that stressed education and hard work as the necessary tools for upward occupational and economic mobility. For all three of these groups, the values of the home did not differ radically from the values espoused in the schools, although the specific content often did.

Those changes that were positive, voiced by some more liberal

academics and politicians, were very slow in reaching the classroom. We found, for example, that texts written at the end of World War I were still part of the curriculum in many locations in the 1940's. Thus, in some areas, inaccuracies, prejudices, and misinformation were transmitted to several generations of elementary school children. The unfortunate negative effects of these inadequacies were confirmed in a 1958 study that found stereotypes and inaccuracies prevalent that were almost identical to the descriptions found in these early textbooks (Isaacs, 1958). We also found that the teachers' manuals of the period gave no hints to the teacher for mitigating the inadequacies of the texts, nor did many teachers feel free to do so on their own.

In the early post-World War II period, there were still relatively few changes in textbooks or teachers' manuals to reflect newly acquired knowledge of the world or its peoples. As we approached the contemporary period in our research, we had high hopes that Asian Americans and Jews would be considerably more visible and more positively regarded than was true in the earlier period. There were, after all, a number of factors that had affected educational philosophy and practice in the preceding three decades:

1) Greater awareness in the United States of places and peoples in Asia and non-Western Europe due to wars, travel, and technological progress in communications;

2) International interaction, both political and professional;

3) Better teacher education than there had been in the 1880-1920 period;

4) Greater public awareness of the function of the self-concept with

respect to learning, attitudes, and the individual's role in society; and

5) Attitudinal changes in society due to guilt feelings about the internment of the Japanese-Americans during World War II, confusion regarding the two Chinas, resentment of our country's military role in the Far East, and horror at the revelations of the Holocaust.

Our survey of elementary readers and social studies texts published in the 1950's and early 1960's revealed little change, however, from the earlier texts. Immigration patterns, exclusion laws, discrimination, and immigrant/minority contributions to American society were rarely found in the histories of twenty years ago.

Following the surge of the civil rights movement in the 1960's, changes in educational theory, new technology, and new interest in ethnicity, educators were pushed to adopt different criteria for texts and ideas for teaching. Impressive and idealistic goals for ethnic equality were stated, propagating more affective visions of multicultural education. What was achieved in this period, however, was preaching that was unrelated to practice. The aftermath of Congressional hearings in 1966 on the content of textbooks yielded the addition of a few non-Caucasian, usually Black, pictures to textbooks, or a few paragraphs mentioning one or another minority group. These were insufficient to boost the self-concept of immigrant/minority students. Multicultural studies were either isolated during an annual Brotherhood Week or as "add-ons" to the regular curriculum at specified intervals, such as the last class hour on Fridays. Neither practice proved adequate to the task of attitude modification, nor did these approaches convey effectively the normalcy of a multicultural society. In

addition, ethnic studies programs in many school districts were introduced at the secondary level rather than in the elementary school, which reduced their effectiveness in reducing prejudices and stereotypy or enhancing the self-concept of the ethnically different child. Too often, also, the programs stressed only one cultural group rather than taking a broad multicultural approach to all groups in a community.

A California Task Force found that none of the 15 basic social studies texts or 45 supplemental texts and teachers' editions they examined in 1971 was in compliance with the revised California State Code on content regarding minority groups (Washington, 1981). For example, a 1970 text had "Very little (and that, negative) on Asians in America"; another 1970 text had "Little on Asia; what is included jumps from 3rd century B.C. to 1912 A.D."; and a 1971 text made "No mention of Japanese-Americans, treatment of Chinese on two pages not well done." Another study, focused on basal readers in use as recently as 1975, found that these texts "perpetuate ethnocentric bias in favor of white culture, values and standards. Such biases alienate minority children from textbooks and education, discourage pride in their own heritage and culture, and conversely, encourage assimilation into the dominant culture" (Racism and Sexism Resource Center, 1976). In our own survey, we looked for Asians in illustrations and text content, and, with the exception of two series of books, found very few. At the same time, we found the story of immigration still largely omitted from American histories and the role of Jews underplayed where it was not omitted entirely. Statewide studies of these more recent texts found insensitivity or outright negativism toward Jews

and omission generally of any content dealing with the religious needs of people (Washington, 1981; Joyce, 1973).

Methods texts of this post-war period also tended to ignore immigrant history, cultural pluralism, and religious differences. These omissions, as well as the lack of references to Jews or Asians in basic education and most college courses, led to new teachers being poorly prepared to increase intercultural understanding or to implement suggestions for further inquiry that are found in some teachers' guides to elementary textbooks.

By the mid-1970's and early 1980's, however, educators, authors, and publishers began to develop and introduce more balanced and meaningful texts and programs in attempts to respond to the demands of an acknowledged multicultural society and the need for more appropriate curriculum content. Today we find much more multicultural content in stories, more narratives reflecting the contributions of a wide variety of immigrant and minority groups to both American history and modern society, and more multiethnic illustrations. Stereotypy is less prevalent, although still present in some texts. Teachers' manuals now provide suggestions for elaborating on textbook content and offering affective instruction relevant to a pluralistic society. We might note that this picture of contemporary texts and manuals appears to be true, too, in those Canadian texts that we have had the opportunity to examine. It is clear that the situation in this most recent decade is considerably better than it was one or six to ten decades ago.

Questions continue about placement or integration of multicultural content in the curriculum, teacher attitudes and practices, and effects

of these on children. Indeed, the recent arrival of thousands of Korean, Vietnamese, and Caribbean children has reawakened some of the old anxieties, hostilities, and concerns. Among adults, these tend to be tied, as they were earlier, to economic threats. Among teachers, anxiety is aroused by their lack of information concerning the home countries of the youngsters and their inability to communicate with them effectively. All of these matters have educational implications.

Present day educators have rejected the notion of assimilation of minority group children that would lead to the diminution of their self concept. Other conflicting criteria and aims of education, however, present obstacles to realizing idealistic goals. The belief has been pervasive that all children are equal and that the schools and their intellectual opportunities must be available to all, no matter how receptive or ill-prepared. Today's emphasis on affective education may lead to conformity, confused thinking, even poor discipline and bad study habits, all of which are every bit as undesirable as the lack of awareness and sensitivity demonstrated in the texts and methods of fifty years ago. Part of the problem is based on minimal teacher preparation for coping with painful truths and feelings that arise in classroom discussion. Other content in affective programs helps students adjust to school demands, but does not necessarily prepare the student to cope with the independent thinking and initiative required in the real world.

On the other hand, technological developments have created a need for an ever increasingly educated population, especially in the more demanding academic sciences. Excellence and achievement in cognitive education has

assumed greater importance. These goals, however, may in practice deny the ideal of equality, for certainly the new immigrant children and some minority groups may find such demands difficult because of language impediments and cultural differences. The schools and the community are torn by conflicting desires and cannot always define their roles. Hence, educators, politicians, and parents have been engaged in raging debates and controversies which have not yet been resolved: In Canada and West Virginia over textbooks (Dick, 1982), in New York City over decentralization, in Boston over busing, and in other localities over sex education. The same uncertainty pervades the issue of race and ethnic differences: busing, neighborhood schools, degree of integration, and bilingual education.

Clearly, multicultural education is a concept whose time has come, for the multicultural rather than the homogeneous nature of our population (and Canada's) is apparent. This means that the study of the many different groups that have lived in this country must be integrated in the curriculum in appropriate contexts. For example, American history and black history are inextricably interwoven both in centuries of slavery and in the struggles for civil rights, as well as in other points in time. The succeeding waves of immigration, resulting from a variety of problems in other countries, have affected the course of this country's history significantly. The literature of other countries and their nationals who came here as immigrants can tell us much about national problems and styles of life that, in turn, can help us understand people's behaviors in terms of their backgrounds.

Teachers must be knowledgeable enough to tell publishers what content

they want included in elementary textbooks. A good text should be balanced in its presentation, including positive and negative aspects of life-styles without stereotyping or preaching. The text must be tactfully accurate and it must be realistic. "Especially in the social studies and language arts areas, every effort must be made to teach understanding of both the contributions and the differences of ethnic groups" (Clark, 1978, p. 164).

Although the acceptance of multicultural education has been widespread, care must be exercised not to stress diversity excessively, devaluing the mastery of common cultural traditions. A positive self-concept based upon pride in one's roots is not sufficient if the student cannot meet the everyday demands of the work place. Ethnicity should not detract from pride in the shared history as Americans or Canadians, and the common vibrant and rich language and literature of the country (Lindsey, 1982).

In addition to creating good affective attitudes centered on intergroup relationships and self-pride, we must continue to emphasize cognitive skills: the ability to think critically, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate. These skills are cultivated through the mastery of reading, writing, and quantitative skills. We do not claim that these goals, which are frequently at odds, can be reached in toto, but conflicts in education should be moderated if not resolved. A more constructive, less dogmatic approach to education and teaching will help lessen disagreements.

To realize these aims, teacher education must be strengthened, both in the area of multicultural content and academic skills. Most schools do not stress the significance and problems of cultural diversity, although

because of the complexity and cultural wealth of innumerable groups, admittedly no one can master all the varieties of experience extant in American and Canadian life. In-service courses can educate teachers in techniques of learning to work with children of various backgrounds. Traditional pre-service curricula in colleges can require greater familiarity with several disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities that can enhance both the usual methods course for teaching elementary social studies and those courses specifically oriented to teaching ethnic studies programs.

The textbook remains important as a teaching tool. Whatever their limitations, texts in history, and even readers, provide a background of information. Neither the classroom teacher nor the text may be able to treat all minorities adequately, and the necessity of treating the history of immigration as a whole remains as a significant issue that must be taught in proper perspective. We recommend, therefore, that the history of immigration to the United States and Canada be taught in the context of world events, whether it be with reference to the Irish potato famine, Russian pogroms, victims of war, Nazi persecution, or dreams of a better life (Egan, 1982). We would also stress that immigrant experience should be incorporated into reading texts along with stories of inventions, poems, and other content. Further, teachers' editions as well as students' texts should contain pertinent questions about feelings of people in the selections, demonstrations of prejudice, examples of biased writing, and similar matters. Supplementary material, interdisciplinary studies, simulations games, community visits, and other educational tools can become assets to such programs (Gezi, 1981; Eldridge, 1982).

There are no absolute and solely correct responses to the present educational dilemma. However, a lessening of ideological struggles and more pragmatic approaches can contribute meaningful concepts of intergroup relations and stimulate the teaching of skills that will enable students from any cultural background to walk any avenue in our society.

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